

SPECIAL REPORT July 6 and 7

Mass meeting at Moss Point - at 9:00 PM, as some three hundred people, black and white, were singing "We Shall Overcome", at least 3 shots were fired towards the hall. Miss Jessie Mae Stallworth, a young Negro woman was standing in front of the Knights of Pythias Hall where the meeting on voter registration was being held - was shot twice. A young Negro man who was standing next to Miss Stallworth observed a green Comet (?) with four white men drive up to the hall and fire the shots from the back of the car. As he ducked he saw Miss Stallworth - who has been participating in the drive for equality in voting - fall to the ground. Inside the hall the mass of people fell to the floor. Some people tried to leave the doors or climb through the windows. The overall atmosphere was one of deathly fear but panic was prevented by the well-disciplined minds of the people.

Within 3 minutes people flocked out of the hall in an attempt to understand what occurred. The people saw Miss Stallworth clasp her stomach in agony but with a face of determination to live. Ron Ridenour, a COFO communications worker in Moss Point called the local operator from a neighbors home to direct the police and an ambulance to come to the scene of the crime. Upon his return to the location of Miss Stallworth he discovered that she had been taken to the Singing River Hospital in Pascagoula by Lawrence Guyot and some others. By this time a significant segment of the crowd expressed great anger. Some spoke of returning home in an endeavor to prevent any more trouble. From 10 to 15 minutes after the shooting at least two police cars arrived on the scene. The lead car was driven by Constable Alford. He was told by COFO workers and local Negroes that Deputy Sheriff Thomas Palmer had been at the meeting to "protect" the people. He left the meeting ten minutes before the shooting. The demand was for protection, the question was how did the white terrorists know when to come, and why did Palmer leave? After Alford nodded his head in assurance (of what we don't know), he and the other police cars sped away.

A few moments after the law enforcement officers left the bloody scene, several more shots were fired, from whom no one knows. People were continuously leaving the scene but many remained ~~with~~ with a frustrated sense of having to do something. Several minutes later after the first squad cars left, others arrived only to leave again as had the others. Some minutes later a white car drove by with a white man and woman inside. Pent-up anger made some people throw rocks at it. Little damage was done. One misguided rock hit one of the COFO cars shattering a part of the windshield while some of the flying glass hit and did not hurt one of the COFO girls. Some minutes before Charles Glas and Ron Ridenour called the Jackson COFO office.

As the last COFO car left the scene it was stopped by a police car. The driver, the same man who was at the meeting to "protect" us, rudely ~~shook~~ told those in the car to get off the streets. (Hopefully the police would not do the same).

As we write this at 12:10 AM, July 7th, we learn that the FBI is on its way and that Miss Stallworth may be in "good condition".

July 6 and 7 - Report of taking Jessie Mae Stallworth to Singing River Hospital as told by Fred Healy -

Jessie Mae Stallworth is the 19 year old Negro girl shot at the mass meeting at KP Park, Moss Point, Miss., the evening of July 6, 1964.

Fred heard about 12 shots - a burst of shots that sounded like a chair falling. He fell to the floor, then got up and ran outside. There was a crowd of people standing around the girl. Someone called or got a cab - it was standing right there. Fred helped put her in the cab and drove to the hospital with her. He saw under her arm, about 4 inches under her armpit, a spot of blood on her blouse.

When we arrived at the hospital we opened the door, the nurse rolled out the stretcher, looked into the car and started rolling the stretcher back into the hospital. Fred told the nurse the girl was hurt very badly, and the nurse said, "Did her father

shoot her or something"? They put her on the stretcher, and they rolled her into the hospital. And there was some commotion and they hesitated as if they had to decide what to do. The girl had to wait approximately 15 minutes before the doctor arrived, they were told they could not call Dr. Morris or Dr. Johnson. The girl's family arrived, and they would not tell anyone what the girl's condition was, but Dr. Morris went in and examined the girl on his own and said that it was not serious.

Atlanta and Jackson were contacted. Fred was talking on the phone, three policemen came in and approached Fred. He said to the person he was talking to on the phone that the policemen were approaching him; they stopped and listened. After 5 minutes, they told him he had another 5 minutes and he would have to close and leave the hospital. When Fred hung up the phone, the three of them walked behind Fred and Lawrence Guyot, the other Cofc worker who went to the hospital, to the exit. As Fred reached to open the door, the policeman outside the door cocked his rifle. They were told they had to leave and get off the street, because the sheriff had declared martial law. There was a group of young people standing outside the hospital, they hesitated and did not move until Guyot told them to break up. "Let's not go to jail now, let's go to jail when we choose to go", he said. As they left the jail, and entered Moss Point, they were stopped by highway patrolmen, that Fred thought might be one regular and one special officer as one did not have on a uniform. The police asked where they were going, to which they answered, Moss Point. They asked where Fred and Guyot lived, they told them Moss Point. They told them to go straight home and get off the street, and he said thank you.

POLICE PROTECTION - On Tuesday morning, July 7, 1964, because of the shooting the night before at the mass meeting at KP park, Tony O'Brien, COFO Freedom School Coordinator called the Sheriff's office and spoke to someone named Berry, who told him to call back after he spoke to a deputy sheriff. Tony called back and told him they were going ahead with the Fr. Sch. and where and when it would be, and asked for protection in view of what happened last night. He said he would send a car around as soon as possible. Tony did not see a police car but one of the students saw a police car go by this morning.

HARRASSMENT - Also on Tuesday morning, July 7, 1964, Rev. Wisham had an encounter with the white driver of a car. The Rev. walking in the company of three Negro boys from here, (the office) to a cafe on the highway. At this corner of East and Bowen St. he paused long enough to say: "You white son of a bitch, see what's coming to you", which he emphasized by banging his black jack on the side of the car. The car had previously passed 2 or 3 times, he banged his blackjack each time. The encounter was on the return trip; Rev. Wisham was alone at this time.

This was the same car as one that passed some of the COFO workers earlier that morning on their way to work. We were going to the home of one of the girls when at the corner of her street, a white man in a car passed us. We were especially aware of any white people in a Negro area because of last night. We stopped at the house; he went past us again, so we recorded the license number. A few minutes later he passed us again, this time as he passed he placed his blackjack on the dash board. We were ready to leave just then and happened to be going in the same direction, so we were able to get a look at the back of his head as we followed him. We saw a short middle aged man with graying hair. The car was a white, recent Comet with Miss. license number JER874.

The same car and man were reported again this noon. Some canvassers on Church St. saw the car pass several times. They wrote down the license number, which met the same description as the above as did the man. He drove past several times, slowly, observing them.